

## THE CONCEPT OF DISCIPLINE IN NOVICE TEACHERS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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### ABSTRACT

This article deals with the concept of discipline in a novice teacher. It is divided into theoretical and empirical parts. The theoretical part deals with discipline as a concept, how to maintain discipline, about discipline failure causes, and the factors causing insubordination. The article also describes authority as one of the most important points in maintaining discipline. It concerns itself with the climate in the classroom and ultimately, the prevention and resolution of indiscipline issues. In the empirical part of the article, it also deals with the data-collection method – namely, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. In our research, hypotheses were set, which the article tries to answer using statistically processed data. A separate chapter of the actual article is devoted to the empirical investigation results.

**KEYWORDS:** Discipline, Authority, Motivation, Semi-Structured Interviews, Questionnaire

### INTRODUCTION

#### THEORETICAL DEFINITION

The concept of discipline can be viewed from several points-of-view. Each person perceives discipline otherwise - simply as obedience, or as a set of rules of behaviour, or as a set of habits acquired through education for example. These views are – to a greater - but also lesser extent, close to the truth.<sup>1</sup>

Discipline, as a complex phenomenon, affects people's lives each and every day. According to Bendl, discipline can be defined as "the conscious adherence to specified standards of conduct."<sup>2</sup>

One of the important aspects is Pedagogical Discipline, which is closely associated with education. Pedagogical discipline is especially aimed at children; and thereby, the given nature to submit to authority. When talking about disciplinary goals, it is thus understood that discipline should create a useful member of the state from a pupil, and create a well-structured life of a student, and has to teach them what the state wants from them as citizens, i.e. obedience to the laws.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>MAKARENKO, Anton Semenovič. *O výchově dětí v rodině*. 7. vyd., v SPN 6. vyd. Praha: SPN, 1957. 149, [2] s. Knihy pro rodiče.

<sup>2</sup>BENDL, Stanislav. *Jak předcházet nekázní, aneb, Kázeňské prostředky*. Vyd. 1. Praha: ISV, 2004. 208 s. Pedagogika. ISBN 80-86642-14-3.

<sup>3</sup>UHER, Jan. *Problém kázně*. V Praze: Dědictví Komenského, 1924. 218 s. Časové otázky a rozpravy pedagogické; sv. 28. Dědictví Komenského; č. 239.

Interpretations of discipline are different and the approaches of individual authors also differ. The previously mentioned Bendl states that the interpretation of discipline can be accessed according to areas like: disciplinary goals, the functions of discipline, discipline content, the establishment of disciplinary standards, responsibility for discipline, and the development of discipline and methods.<sup>4</sup>

We can rank several phenomena among the causes of indiscipline, or in other words, high-risk behaviour syndrome. These events can include for example, substance abuse, negative phenomena in the reproductive field and negative psychosocial effects.

Negative phenomena in the reproductive field are understood to include, for example, early initiation of one's sexual life or excessive changing of sexual partners. Negative phenomena in the psychosocial field are understood to mean aggression, behavioural disorders, or depression.<sup>5</sup> Other causes include: the teacher, teaching activities, behavioural aspects, emotional and physiological reasons, the environment and also, the student's personality and relationship to learning. These causes of disorderly conduct are those manifested most often.

One of the ways of maintaining discipline among pupils is that teacher's authority. The presuppositions - not only for teaching success, but also for compliance with discipline, is precisely this authority of the teacher. Authority can be divided into:

- **Personal** - primary, or thus natural
- **Functional** – i.e. professional
- **Positional** - secondary
- **Formal** - resulting from one's position in the organizational chart
- **Informal** – resulting from abilities, talents, education<sup>6</sup>

These types of authority work together; sometimes, one replaces another. The ideal situation would be if the teacher had informal authority, which derives from their command of the subject, from the degree of their pedagogical skills and also, a good relationship with pupils. But this is not so simple; for example, for a novice teacher because the pedagogical competence of instilling discipline (the teacher has the authority) is very complicated, and the teacher must work on it.<sup>7</sup>

So how can a teacher build authority? This is dependent on the expression of status, teaching competence, teachers themselves, the effective and equitable resolution of situations that the teacher has to deal with connected with undesirable pupil behaviour and concordance between deeds and words. This listing is for a teaching assistant on just how to build authority. Varying influences affect the students and their inappropriate behaviour and authority of the teacher is also one of them.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup>BENDL, Stanislav. *Kázeňské problémy ve škole*. Aktualiz. a dopl. vyd. Praha: Triton, 2011. 260 s. ISBN 978-80-7387-436-0.

<sup>5</sup>BENDL, Stanislav. *Kázeňské problémy ve škole*. Aktualiz. a dopl. vyd. Praha: Triton, 2011. 260 s. ISBN 978-80-7387-436-0.

<sup>6</sup>PODLAHOVÁ, Libuše. *První kroky učitele*. Vyd. 1. Praha: Triton, 2004. 223 s. První pomoc pro pedagogy; 1. ISBN 80-7254-474-8.

<sup>7</sup>PODLAHOVÁ, Libuše. *První kroky učitele*. Vyd. 1. Praha: Triton, 2004. 223 s. První pomoc pro pedagogy; 1. ISBN 80-7254-474-8.

<sup>8</sup>PODLAHOVÁ, Libuše. *První kroky učitele*. Vyd. 1. Praha: Triton, 2004. 223 s. První pomoc pro pedagogy; 1. ISBN 80-7254-474-8.

One of the important features in creating a positive climate in the classroom, which acts on pupils' discipline, is motivation. Just as the teacher's authority is important, so too is it also important to motivate students to not even think about improper conduct. In the course of the motivation process, it is important that students be motivated from several sides. This has to do with internal motivation, external motivation and the expected success of the pupil.<sup>9</sup> Internal motivation includes to what degree the students involve themselves in certain activities on the grounds of meeting their own needs, like curiosity, their interest in the lecture topic, as well as to gain skills and abilities.

Extrinsic motivation can include their participation in activities such that a pupil achieves the specific defined goals. It is precisely why internal and external motivations are often pitted against each other, but this does not mean that they are incompatible. The third strength of motivation is the expectation of success. This expectation is assigned to how students feel that they can achieve success in the given activity.<sup>10</sup>

"Rules" or "principles" exist by means of which by which indiscipline can be resolved, or at least to encounter insubordination and preventively counter it. So, how then does one deal with indiscipline and ensure the prevention of indiscipline? For example: By discovering insubordination, revealing the causes of indiscipline, using a diverse range of educational resources, the implementation of lectures for teachers, the introduction of social educators and school psychologists in schools, and more.<sup>11</sup>

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main aim of the research investigation was to develop a basic discourse on discipline for novice teachers, by an analysis and summary of the basic components of disciplinary techniques by means of which teachers manage pupils' indiscipline in the classroom. This survey was carried out in several empirical steps. An important objective of the analysis was precisely the creation of the afore-mentioned discourse on discipline in the educational activities of novice teachers.<sup>12</sup>

The given empirical study served for the verification of the functionality of the discourse. It was necessary to implement the survey in several mutually-consecutive steps. Some steps in the theoretical analysis form the basis for the empirical investigation and, vice versa, data from the empirical investigation helped in creating viewpoints and internal structures of the discourse. The selected methodology represents the basis for the optimization of the generated discourse. The main aim of this work was further sub-divided into sub-goals, which are evident in the form of the specific orientation of the individual stages of the work of creating and subsequently verifying the functionality of discourse.

Analysis of the given sample and the typology of respondents as compared against defined theories, form the basis for the validity and reliability of the research investigation. This analysis is supplemented by the Cluster Analysis and Factor Analysis of the data elements, which means that it eliminates the averaging of the assessment and inappropriate influences from entering the empirical research (e.g. randomness of answers, false answers, etc.); and also optimizes the validated system for the assessment of data (i.e. data reliability). Verification of the independence of the assessment on the preferences and, for instance, the attitudes of respondents, is resolved by using Non-parametric Tests for Ordinal Data Types in double and multiple comparisons.

<sup>9</sup>KYRIACOU, Chris. *Klíčové dovednosti učitele: cesty k lepšímu vyučování*. 1. vyd. Praha:Portál, 1996. 153 s. Pedagogická praxe. ISBN 80-7178-022-7.

<sup>10</sup>KYRIACOU, Chris. *Klíčové dovednosti učitele: cesty k lepšímu vyučování*. 1. vyd. Praha:Portál, 1996. 153 s. Pedagogická praxe. ISBN 80-7178-022-7.

<sup>11</sup>BENDL, Stanislav. *Školní kázeň: metody a strategie*. Vyd. 1. Praha: ISV, 2001. 267 s. Pedagogika. ISBN 80-85866-80-3.

<sup>12</sup>HAINING, R. (1990). *Spatial Data Analysis in the Social and Environmental Sciences*. Cambridge University Press

The empirical research was realized in the following steps:

- The selection and identification of a research sample of respondents
- The elimination of undesirable elements (e.g. a tendency to mediocrity etc.)
- The establishment of the research assumptions
- The specification, optimization and innovation of the research tools
- The modification of the research sample
- The implementation of the survey
- The verification of the independence of the optimized system data

In the context of our investigation in verifying and determining the assumptions and hypotheses, this was based on Factor and Cluster Analysis elements. It is precisely the use of Factor Analysis that does not allow the formation of classical hypotheses.<sup>13</sup> In the course of applying this method, it is not possible to define classical hypotheses by using other statistical methods.<sup>14</sup>

In view of these facts and the nature of the empirical data we obtained, as well as for the content and form-making purposes of the discourse - in which the basic premise is set as the specification of the characteristic features of the concept of discipline as a means of educational influence for novice teachers, it was decided to set the research premises - verified in the pilot study, thus reducing the required number of variables necessary for the specification of the discourse with regard to the theoretical definition. Verification using Cluster Analysis is consistent with the stated goals of the research.

One of the important characteristics for its use in practice is the clarity and operational aspects of the evaluation system; its independence, and support of the important characteristics of the respondents. Other factors include gender and length of experience. The novice teacher research sample is subjected to simple descriptive statistics. As part of the pilot study, assumptions were established and these assumptions were then subsequently subjected to statistical verification and further specified. Based on the preliminary research, the following hypotheses were created for the main empirical research:

- *Length practice has no influence on the creation and maintenance of teachers' authority in the classroom*, this hypothesis tracks the difference between length of practice, and secondarily, also between the sexes in the formation of authority; (e.g. teacher rigour, maintaining order and silence, reseating unruly pupils, adherence to compliance with the School Rules and Regulations, etc.)
- *No statistically significant difference between males and females exists in their perception of disciplinary measures to maintain the authority of the teacher in the classroom*, the hypothesis implies the effort to discover and describe the relationship of discipline and gender difference in the perception of disciplinary means between men and women
- *Teachers, unlike female teachers, perceive the need to determine the precise rules and due observance of*

<sup>13</sup>HENDL, J. (2004). *Přehled statistických metod zpracování dat*. Praha: Portál

<sup>14</sup> MACDONALD, R. P. (1991). *Faktorová analýza a příbuzné metody v psychologii*. Praha: Academia.

*discipline in the classroom as important*, this hypothesis allows one to track the uncovering of the causes of perceptions and the building of the relationship between teacher and student; where the gender and seniority of the teachers are the interesting variables

- *In the course of building a teacher's sense of responsibility towards their educational work in the classroom the length of practice does not play an important role*, the goal here is to describe the level of the responsibility that is expressed in relation to their profession and it is assumed that a significant difference does exist in the length of working experience in respondents and in relation to the profession they perform
- *In the case of repeated violation of the disciplinary rules, compliance with them is required more by teachers with minimal practice/working experience*, this hypothesis captures part of the discourse that expresses the methodological concept of discipline and focuses on building the relationship between teacher and student - in the sense of complying with discipline as an element of education
- *Differences do exist in the creative creation of disciplinary techniques between men and women*, this has to do with the premise of using creativity in teachers' work and the setting of rules for building a teacher-pupil relationship, and track the way the pupil follows the accepted elements of discipline

Semi-structured interviews were used with the selected respondent sample. The interviews related to issues of discipline and were implemented with novice teachers who had completed their first two-month continuous teaching job. These interviews were then transcribed, and the transcripts were analyzed as were the biographical responses of novice teachers. The analysis results of testimonies with the help of semi-structured interviews are descriptions of resolving a situation in a school environment in the context of discipline.

A questionnaire was selected as the essential element of the empirically-tuned research for obtaining the data. Using a questionnaire to collect data is characterized as indirect research technique of measuring and examining information on the knowledge, opinions and attitudes of those interviewed.<sup>15</sup> The use of questionnaires is one of the most commonly used methods in research in the Social Sciences, it is used for the mass determination of facts, opinions, attitudes, preferences, values, motives, needs, interests and events.<sup>16</sup> In the research investigation, an electronic version of the questionnaire was used. The questionnaire included preliminary research input information, further broken down into content units and the final part. The questionnaire included items designed to determine the basic characteristics of the respondents (e.g. gender, age, discipline/field studied, length of practice), all of which should offer answers.

The other items were compiled of polynomial scaled items with Likert Scale elements. In them, the respondents assessed the degree of truth of the statement and assigned agreement to the question by means of rating scales. The range contained 7 degrees, where 1 meant that this variant best described the respondent's consent with the evaluation criterion; and 7, i.e. the evaluation criterion does not matter for the evaluator. The questionnaire was distributed among the students of the Master's Degree program at the Pedagogical Faculty of Palacky University in Olomouc during a 6-month period through the Gogol Web interface. For the pilot study, the questionnaire was revised down to a total of 23 items; of which 4 items were dichotomous questions on the basic characteristics of the respondent, while other items were treated as polynomial scales with Likert Scale elements. As a result of the chosen methodology, it proved possible to process the data

<sup>15</sup> ŠVEC, Š. (2009). *Metodologie věd o výchově*. Brno: Paido.

<sup>16</sup> GAVORA, P. a kol. (2010). *Elektronická učebnice pedagogického výzkumu*. [online]

further using statistical methods.

The enumeration methods used in analyzing the data include Open Coding, Factor Analysis and Cluster Analysis were used for statistical comparison of the data and its verification. The research survey was divided into several phases. The aim of the first steps in the specification phase of the research tools was to assemble the relevant number of respondents; while further steps led to the specification of data collection tools – i.e. the questionnaire and its optimization, which consisted of pre-research data collection and its statistical analysis. The optimized data collection instrument was subsequently applied in practice. The data thereby obtained was subsequently subjected to analysis by statistical methods.

## RESULTS

As already mentioned above, semi-structured questionnaires were used on a selected sample of respondents. These interviews were transcribed and subsequently analyzed. The result of these semi-structured interview description analyses is a description of the resolution of the given situation. One of the selected results is the description of a situation in which teachers were asked the following question with this phrasing: *How do you view discipline in relation to pupils?*

*"I perceive discipline such that I approach pupils in a friendly way; but I keep my distance. I am fair, I do not play favourites with them - and that's my goal; simply, just to create a relationship."*

*"The process is simple. As a PE teacher, the rules are set and I'm fair. Indiscipline sometimes happens, but I occasionally let pupils "muck-about" thereby achieving the fact that they listen to me more."*

From these responses, one can clearly and distinctly see that every teacher looks on discipline in relation to pupils with other eyes. This fact is also a response that **differences exist** in the creative creation of disciplinary techniques between men and women. This result confirms one of the hypotheses mentioned in the article above for us.

Another response to the hypothesis shows us the testimony of the semi-structured interviews, where the question was phrased as follows: *What resources do you use to ensure that discipline is respected?*

*"...I usually use phrases like: At school, we do not play but pay attention and learn. If you finish early, do not disturb the others. If you copy (from others), I will take away your test."*

*"... Not only in the gym, but also in the other lessons, I try to listen to the children; thus, if it is necessary, I tell them they have to go to the blackboard and they say no and continue to sit, I come to their desk and tell them in a firm voice, "You had better get to the board right away." From my voice (tone), it is definitely heard that I am serious and I do not want to hear the answer is no."*

These responses demonstrate and confirm the hypothesis that is **no statistically significant difference exists** between men and women in their perception of disciplinary measures. While the responses are different, they are based only on teachers' experience.

For more results and testing of the hypotheses, statistical data using Contingency Tables was used. This data was collected in the questionnaire, which is part of the empirical investigation mentioned above.

Contingency Table statement frequency for verifying the hypothesis: *"The length of working practice (WP) does not affect the creation and maintenance of teachers' authority in the classroom."*

Table 1

Length of WP	Absolutely Agree	Agree	No Selected Standpoint	Disagree	Disagree Absolutely	Line Total
0 to 1	4.492308	21.33846	2.33846	21.33846	4.492308	73.0000
2 to 3	1.600000	7.600000	7.600000	7.600000	1.600000	26.0000
More than 3	1.907692	9.06154	9.06154	9.06154	1.907692	31.0000
<b>Total</b>	<b>8.000000</b>	<b>38.00000</b>	<b>38.00000</b>	<b>38.00000</b>	<b>38.00000</b>	<b>130.0000</b>

This contingency table depicts that teachers' length of working practise **is statistically significant** for exploiting strictness, requiring silence and similar elements, i.e. authority maintenance tools. Thus, the hypothesis about the unimportance of the length of experience is refuted.

Table 2

	$\chi^2$ - Quadrate (Chi-Square)	Statistical Significance	Probability
Pearson's $\chi^2$ - Quadrate	22.83165	df=8	p= 0.00359
M-V $\chi^2$ - Quadrate	22.86033	df=8	p= 0.00355

Even from the Pearson's (Chi-square) Quadrate above, it is clear that there **is a significant statistically significant** difference in the percentage representation ( $p = 0.00359$ ) of this question about the significance or otherwise of length of working practice.

Another hypothesis is depicted in the following table below, where it tried to discover whether male teachers - as against female teachers, perceive the importance of determining precise rules in the classroom for disciplinary maintenance purposes differently. This hypothesis helps to track the causes of the perception and the building of teacher-pupil relationships.

Contingency Table statement frequency for verifying the hypothesis: *"Male teachers, unlike female teachers, perceive the importance of determining precise rules for disciplinary purposes in the classroom differently."*

Table 3

Gender	Absolutely Agree	Agree	No Selected Standpoint	Disagree	Disagree Absolutely
Female	20.13846	36.13077	14.80769	5.92308	77.0000
Male	13.86154	24.86923	10.19231	4.07692	53.0000
<b>Total</b>	<b>34.000000</b>	<b>61.00000</b>	<b>25.00000</b>	<b>10.00000</b>	<b>130.0000</b>

Statistical elaboration of the data – for verifying the hypothesis: *"Male teachers, unlike female teachers, perceive the importance of determining precise rules for disciplinary purposes in the classroom differently."*

Table 4

	$\chi^2$ - Quadrate (Chi-Square)	Statistical Significance	Probability
Pearson's $\chi^2$ - Quadrate	9.710890	df=3	p= 0.02119
M-V $\chi^2$ - Quadrate	9.624974	df=3	p= 0.02204

The survey results indicate that the fact that a gender difference exists **is significant and is marked**. This fact also benefits from the fact that school facilities managers prefer the male gender in their recruitment of new educational employees. It is expected that teachers with at least one year's experience will master building relationships with pupils using disciplinary techniques better than teachers who have just graduated from teacher training colleges. This was also the reason for creating another hypothesis.

Contingency Table statement frequency for verifying the hypothesis: *"Length of working practice plays an important role in building teacher's responsibility towards their educational work in the classroom."*

Table 5

Length of Working Practise	Absolutely Agree	Agree	No Selected Standpoint	Disagree	Disagree Absolutely
0-1	35.93846	28.63846	7.30000	1.123077	73.0000
2-3	12.80000	10.20000	2.60000	0.40000	26.0000
3-more	15.26154	12.16154	3.10000	0.476923	31.0000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>64.000000</b>	<b>51.00000</b>	<b>13.00000</b>	<b>2.00000</b>	<b>130.0000</b>

The results show that **no statistically significant difference exists** between the lengths of teachers working practice in building a teacher's responsibility (authority) to their educational work in the classroom. It is (well) known that a novice teacher is full of enthusiasm and anticipation. Each teacher builds/has to build authority themselves.

Contingency Table statement frequency for verifying the hypothesis: *"In the course of repeated violation of the disciplinary rules, compliance is required more by teachers with a minimum experience."*

Table 6

Length of WP	Absolutely Agree	Agree	No Selected Standpoint	Disagree	Disagree Absolutely	Line Total
0-1	6.17692	35.93846	6.17692	15.16154	9.54615	73.0000
2-3	2.20000	12.80000	2.20000	5.40000	3.40000	26.0000
3- or more	2.62308	15.26154	2.62308	6.43846	4.05385	31.0000
<b>Total</b>	<b>11.000000</b>	<b>64.00000</b>	<b>11.00000</b>	<b>27.00000</b>	<b>17.0000</b>	<b>130.0000</b>

The results show that they **confirm the fact** that even minimal experience and inexperience **play an important role** in building teacher-pupil relationships and the student's positive acceptance of discipline in the course of breaching the rules.

## CONCLUSIONS

This discourse on discipline from the perspective of power and power principles is expressed as a construct of cognitive, emotional structures of the discipline process, in which are implemented various fundamental policies and strategies with the purpose of the education and socialisation of the individual. Discipline takes place on the level of pupil-pupil, pupil-pupil group; in the school environment, this takes place at the teacher-pupil and pupil-teacher relationship levels. a group of takes place at the level of the teacher-pupil, teachers and pupils.

These strategies contain the types of management solutions to social situations among pupils. In the school environment, this has to do with a pedagogical, educational situation. The empirical investigation helped to unify the



theoretical framework of the perception of discipline by (novice) teachers in the school environment with the practical part, in which the hypotheses were established. These hypotheses were answered with the aid of structured interviews and questionnaires, which were statistically analyzed. The empirical investigation also pointed up the advantage of the chosen methodological approach.

The data collection methods are perfectly adequate for this type of analysis. The methods also provide many thought-provoking outputs of the empirical verification. The concept of discipline presented in this article suggests a link with many previously-known facts that are contained in the professional monographs published here (in the Czech Republic). It highlights the possibilities and limits of creating a structure which deals with discipline in a novice teacher. The important fact is that novice teachers be aware of the importance of discipline and its application and maintenance and compliance in the course of their work as well as in shaping their relationship to their profession.

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